

ablating tissue to form a lesion around the pulmonary veins with the at least one ablating element positioned proximate to the location on the epicardial surface to form at least part of the lesion around the pulmonary veins.

283. The method of claim 282, wherein the step of ablating tissue comprises the step of ablating tissue around at least one pulmonary vein.

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284. The method of claim 282, wherein the step of ablating tissue comprises the step of forming transmural lesions around the pulmonary veins.

285. The method of claim 282, wherein the step of positioning the flexible tubular member comprises the step of encircling at least one pulmonary vein.

286. The method of claim 285, wherein the step of ablating tissue results in the creation of a continuous transmural lesion around the at least one pulmonary vein.

287. The method of claim 282, wherein the step of ablating tissue comprises the step of applying one or more ablative energies from the group consisting of: radiofrequency, ultrasound, microwave, cryogenic and laser.

288. The method of claim 287, wherein the flexible tubular member is adapted to transmit the one or more ablative energies.

289. The method of claim 282, wherein the step of positioning the flexible tubular member comprises the step of encircling the pulmonary veins.

290. The method of claim 282, wherein the location on the epicardial surface comprises at least a portion of the transverse sinus.

291. The method of claim 282, wherein the location on the epicardial surface comprises at least a portion of the oblique sinus.

292. The method of claim 282, wherein the at least one ablation element emits unidirectional ablation energy and the step of ablating tissue comprises the step of directing ablation energy towards the epicardial surface.

293. A method of ablating epicardial tissue around the pulmonary veins, comprising the steps of:

providing an elongated flexible tubular member having at least one lumen and a distal end portion;

providing at least one ablation device comprising an ablation means, the at least one ablation device configured to be slidably received within the at least one lumen of the flexible tubular member;

positioning the distal portion of the flexible tubular member in contact with a location on an epicardial surface of the heart;

transluminally positioning the ablation means within the at least one lumen of the flexible tubular member until the ablation means is located at least partially within the distal end portion; and

ablating tissue to form a lesion around the pulmonary veins with the ablation means positioned proximate to the location on the epicardial surface to form at least part of the lesion around the pulmonary veins.

294. The method of claim 293, wherein the ablation means comprises an energy delivery portion, ablation energy being transmitted therefrom during the step of ablating tissue.

295. The method of claim 294, wherein the ablation energy is one or more energies from the group consisting of: radiofrequency, ultrasound, microwave, cryogenic and laser.

296. The method of claim 294, wherein the energy delivery portion is an antenna and the step of ablating tissue further comprises the step of transmitting microwave energy.

297. A method of ablating cardiac tissue, comprising the steps of:

providing an elongated flexible tubular member having at least one lumen and a distal end portion;